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COPY NO. 15 of 15

NSC 5412/2

December 28, 1955

# NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

NSC 5412/2

## ATTENTION

THE ENCLOSED TOP SECRET CONTROL FORM MUST BE COMPLETED BY EACH INDIVIDUAL (1) WHO READS THIS DOCUMENT WHOLLY OR IN PART OR (2) WHO PERSONALLY HANDLES IT AND HAS ACCESS TO ITS CONTENTS

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Auth: EO 11652

Date: 20 Aug 1976

By: Frederic W. Davis

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
to the  
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
on  
COVERT OPERATIONS

- References: A. NSC 5412/1  
B. Memo for NSC from Executive Secretary, subject: "Report of the Planning Coordination Group", dated December 20, 1955  
C. NSC Action No. 1497

The President has this date approved the amendment of paragraph 7-a of NSC 5412/1 as submitted to and approved by the other statutory members of the National Security Council by Memorandum Approval in response to the reference memorandum of December 20, 1955. The President and the other statutory members of the Council have also approved the recommendation that paragraphs 4-a and 7-b of NSC 5412/1 be amended as necessary to take account of the termination of the Planning Coordination Group and to conform to the substance of the language in paragraph 7-a thereof.

Accordingly the enclosed National Security Council directive, incorporating the above-mentioned amendments to NSC 5412/1, is transmitted herewith for implementation by all executive departments and agencies of the U. S. Government concerned, as indicated therein.

The enclosed directive, as adopted and approved, supersedes NSC 5412/1.

It is requested that special security precautions be observed in the handling of the enclosed directive, and that access to it be very strictly limited on an absolute need-to-know basis.

It is further requested that all copies of NSC 5412/1 be returned to this office for destruction upon receipt of this directive.

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Auth: EO 11652

Date: 20 May 1976

By: Jeane W. DAVIS

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

JAMES S. LAY, JR.  
Executive Secretary

Distribution:

- The President (via Mr. Anderson)
- The Secretary of State
- The Secretary of Defense
- The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
- The Director of Central Intelligence
- The Executive Officer, Operations Coordinating Board

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL DIRECTIVE

on

COVERT OPERATIONS

1. The National Security Council, taking cognizance of the vicious covert activities of the USSR and Communist China and the governments, parties and groups dominated by them (hereinafter collectively referred to as "International Communism") to discredit and defeat the aims and activities of the United States and other powers of the free world, determined, as set forth in NSC directives 10/2 and 10/5, that, in the interests of world peace and U. S. national security, the overt foreign activities of the U. S. Government should be supplemented by covert operations.

2. The Central Intelligence Agency had already been charged by the National Security Council with conducting espionage and counter-espionage operations abroad. It therefore seemed desirable, for operational reasons, not to create a new agency for covert operations, but, subject to directives from the NSC, to place the responsibility for them on the Central Intelligence Agency and correlate them with espionage and counter-espionage operations under the over-all control of the Director of Central Intelligence.

3. The NSC has determined that such covert operations shall to the greatest extent practicable, in the light of U. S. and Soviet capabilities and taking into account the risk of war, be designed to:

a. Create and exploit troublesome problems for International Communism, impair relations between the USSR and Communist China and between them and their satellites, complicate control within the USSR, Communist China and their satellites, and retard the growth of the military and economic potential of the Soviet bloc.

b. Discredit the prestige and ideology of International Communism, and reduce the strength of its parties and other elements.

c. Counter any threat of a party or individuals directly or indirectly responsive to Communist control to achieve dominant power in a free world country.

d. Reduce International Communist control over any areas of the world.

e. Strengthen the orientation toward the United States of the peoples and nations of the free world, accentuate, wherever possible, the identity of interest between such peoples and nations and the United States as well as favoring, where appropriate, those groups

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genuinely advocating or believing in the advancement of such mutual interests, and increase the capacity and will of such peoples and nations to resist International Communism.

f. In accordance with established policies and to the extent practicable in areas dominated or threatened by International Communism, develop underground resistance and facilitate covert and guerrilla operations and ensure availability of those forces in the event of war, including wherever practicable provision of a base upon which the military may expand these forces in time of war within active theaters of operations as well as provision for stay-behind assets and escape and evasion facilities.

4. Under the authority of Section 102(d)(5) of the National Security Act of 1947, the National Security Council hereby directs that the Director of Central Intelligence shall be responsible for:

a. Ensuring, through designated representatives of the Secretary of State and of the Secretary of Defense, that covert operations are planned and conducted in a manner consistent with United States foreign and military policies and with overt activities, and consulting with and obtaining advice from [the Operations Coordinating Board and] other departments or agencies as appropriate.

b. Informing, through appropriate channels and on a need-to-know basis, agencies of the U. S. Government, both at home and abroad (including diplomatic and military representatives), of such operations as will affect them.

5. In addition to the provisions of paragraph 4, the following provisions shall apply to wartime covert operations:

a. Plans for covert operations to be conducted in active theaters of war and any other areas in which U. S. forces are engaged in combat operations will be drawn up with the assistance of the Department of Defense and will be in consonance with and complementary to approved war plans of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

b. Covert operations in active theaters of war and any other areas in which U. S. forces are engaged in combat operations will be conducted under such command and control relationships as have been or may in the future be approved by the Department of Defense.

6. As used in this directive, "covert operations" shall be understood to be all activities conducted pursuant to this directive which are so planned and executed that any U. S. Government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons and that if uncovered the U. S. Government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them. Specifically, such operations shall include any covert activities related to: propaganda, political action; economic warfare; preventive direct action,

including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition; escape and evasion and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states or groups including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberation groups; support of indigenous and anti-communist elements in threatened countries of the free world; deception plans and operations; and all activities compatible with this directive necessary to accomplish the foregoing. Such operations shall not include: armed conflict by recognized military forces, espionage and counter-espionage, nor cover and deception for military operations.

7. Except as the President otherwise directs, designated representatives of the Secretary of State and of the Secretary of Defense of the rank of Assistant Secretary or above, and a representative of the President designated for this purpose, shall hereafter be advised in advance of major covert programs initiated by CIA under this policy or as otherwise directed, and shall be the normal channel for giving policy approval for such programs as well as for securing coordination of support therefor among the Departments of State and Defense and the CIA.

8. This directive supersedes and rescinds NSC 10/2, NSC 10/5, NSC 5412, NSC 5412/1, and subparagraphs "a" and "b" under the heading "Additional Functions of the Operations Coordinating Board" on page 1 of the President's memorandum for the Executive Secretary, National Security Council, supplementing Executive Order 10483.



ANNEX TO NSC 5412/2Standard Procedures for Insuring Implementation  
of Paragraph 7 of NSC 5412/2

(1) With respect to a covert program to be recommended by CIA for policy approval, the NSC 5412/2 Group may decide at any meeting whether to proceed at such meeting to consider and act upon an oral presentation of such covert program or to base such consideration on a detailed paper to be circulated to the Group members in advance of a subsequent meeting. Any paper so circulated will be handled on a "read-and-return" basis in order to avoid duplicate files, thereby enhancing the security of the information contained in such paper.

(2) At a meeting held to discuss a detailed paper circulated pursuant to (1) above, the Group members will decide in each instance on the procedures to be followed to provide coordinated consideration prior to the Group's giving final policy approval and to provide coordinated support after such approval.

(3) CIA will keep the State and Defense Departments advised on a need-to-know and secure basis of developments pertaining to the implementation of programs to which policy approval has been given by the Group.

(4) In accordance with the exception provided for in paragraph 7 of NSC 5412/2, the standard procedure set forth above shall not apply to the case of a particularly sensitive project which relates exclusively to U. S. foreign policy and which does not involve military implications. In such case, approval of such project by the Secretary of State shall constitute both sufficient authorization for initiation of the project by the Director of Central Intelligence and policy approval therefor. The Director of Central Intelligence shall report any such exception (without identification) to the NSC 5412/2 Group.\*

\* In approving the above recommendations, the President directed that whenever the Secretary of State takes action under this paragraph, he shall inform the President.

ANNEX to  
NSC 5412/2

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Trans'd by 3/26/57 memo